

INTRODUCTION OF THE ASTHMA
MANAGEMENT PLANS IN SCHOOL
ACT**HON. MAZIE K. HIRONO**

OF HAWAII

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 3, 2011

Ms. HIRONO. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to introduce the Asthma Management Plans in School Act.

Asthma is the most common childhood disease in the United States, affecting 7.1 million children.

Every year, children lose more than 13 million school days due to asthma, and their parents must skip work to take care of them.

Hawaii has a higher rate of childhood asthma than any other state. According to the latest data from the Centers for Disease Control, 18.6% of children in Hawaii have had asthma

at some point in their life. This is much higher than the national rate of 13.3%. Along with common allergens and irritants, Hawaii's volcanic fog, or "vog," is a common trigger for asthma attacks, due to the continuous eruption of Kilauea volcano on Hawaii Island.

In Kona on Hawaii Island, 13.8% of people with asthma have needed to go to the emergency room for treatment. In the Nanakuli/Waianae area on Oahu, 10.4% went to the emergency room. Asthma costs Hawaii an estimated \$18.2 million each year in direct medical costs alone.

Although asthma cannot be cured, it can be controlled with education and the right medicine.

The Asthma Management Plans in School Act will help children who suffer from an asthma attack while in school. My bill will provide grants to schools or local public health agencies in high-asthma areas to develop asthma management plans.

Grantees will be able to purchase emergency asthma medication and devices including inhalers, nebulizers, spacers, valved holding chambers (VHCs), and epinephrine to stop anaphylactic shock. School staff will learn about the disease and gain tools to help children if they have an asthma attack at school.

This bill has been endorsed by the Allergy & Asthma Network Mothers of Asthmatics (AANMA), the leading nonprofit organization dedicated to eliminating suffering and death due to asthma, allergies, and related conditions.

I am proud to work with the Hawaii Department of Health Asthma Control Program and the Hawaii Asthma Initiative.

I also thank my colleague Congresswoman Carol Shea-Porter for her work on this legislation in the previous congress.

I urge my colleagues to support the bill.